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Assistant Secretary Washburn Announces Extension of Comment Period for Secretarial Elections Proposed Rule to January 16, 2015

WASHINGTON, DC – Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs Kevin K. Washburn today announced that the Department of the Interior has extended to January 16, 2015, the public comment period for a proposed rule to update the regulations on the procedures by which Secretarial elections are handled. A Secretarial election is a federal election conducted by the Secretary of the Interior under a federal statute or tribal governing document in accordance with 25 CFR Part 81.

The rule proposes to update Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) regulations at 25 CFR Part 81, which govern how the BIA conducts Secretarial elections for federally recognized Indian tribes, and 25 CFR Part 82, which govern how their tribal members can petition for a Secretarial election. The proposed rule would combine the two provisions into one Code of Federal Regulations part at 25 CFR Part 81, and make other updates to reflect changes in statutory law. The Department held three consultation sessions this year with tribal leaders on the proposed rule, but is granting additional time for comments.

The proposed rule is available for viewing at <http://www.bia.gov/WhoWeAre/AS-IA/ORM/SecElections/index.htm>.

The Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs oversees the BIA, which is headed by a director who is responsible for managing day-to-day operations through four offices – Indian Services, Justice Services, Trust Services and Field Operations. These offices directly administer or fund tribally based infrastructure, law enforcement, social services, tribal governance, natural and energy resources, and trust management programs for the nation's federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native tribes and villages through 12 regional offices and 81 agencies.

The Office of Indian Services Division of Tribal Government Services administers the 25 CFR Part 81 regulations. For more information about the BIA Division of Tribal Government Services, visit <http://www.indianaffairs.gov/WhoWeAre/BIA/OIS/TribalGovernmentServices/index.htm>.

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